

PREVENTING VEHICLE THEFT

- Take Your Keys. One out of every five vehicles stolen had the keys in it.
- Lock Your Car. Approximately half of all vehicles stolen were left unlocked.
- Never Hide a Second Set of Keys in Your Car. Extra keys can easily be found if a thief takes time to look.
- Park in Well-Lighted Areas.
- Park in Attended Lots. Auto thieves do not like witnesses and prefer unattended parking lots.
- If You Park in an Attended Lot, Leave Only the Ignition/Door Key. If your trunk and glove box use the same key as the door, have one of them changed. Don't give the attendant easy access to your glove box and trunk. Upon returning, check the tires, spare and battery to insure they are the same as those you had when you parked.
- Never Leave Your Car Running, Even if you'll Only Be Gone for a Minute. Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas stations, ATM's, etc. Many vehicles are also stolen on cold mornings when the owner leaves the vehicle running to warm up.
- Completely Close Car Windows When Parking. Don't make it any easier for the thief to enter your vehicle.
- Don't Leave Valuables in plain view. Don't make your car a more desirable target for thieves by leaving valuables in plain sight.

Investing in Vehicle Protection

- Ignition Kill Switch. Splice an inexpensive toggle switch into your ignition wire or to your starter. The trick is hiding the switch well. Keypads, pressure pads and more expensive "Immobilizers" and "Passkeys" can also be used.
- Fuel Kill Switch. The valve that halts the fuel supply is closed.
- Visible Steering Wheel Lock. Prevents the steering wheel from being turned.
- Floorboard Locks. Devices that disable the gas or brake pedal.
- Gearshift Locks. Disables shifting of the transmission.
- Tire/Wheel Locks. Prevents the vehicle from moving.
- Hood Locks. Prevents the thief from gaining access to your security system and battery.
- Armored Collar Around the Steering Column. Protects the column and ignition.
- Alarms. Security systems which make loud warning sounds when doors/hood/trunk are opened. Optional sensors detect glass breakage, motion, tampering, and towing. Panic buttons, back-up batteries, flashing parking lights or headlights, and automatic engine-disable features are also popular.
- Vehicle Tracking. Transmitter hidden in car enables police to track car (may not be available in all areas).

(Some car insurance companies may give you a discount for certain anti-theft devices. Check with your agent for details.)

When Shopping For a Vehicle

- Be suspicious of any deal that seems "too good to be true."
- When buying from a private individual, make sure that the title and registration match the name and address of the person selling the car.
- Be cautious of a seller with no fixed address, place of employment or phone number.
- Ask the seller for references about past financing and insurance on the vehicle. Verify the information with the bank, finance company, or agent.
- Ensure the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) plate on the automobile's dash is present, secure, and has no loose rivets.

- Check to ensure the VIN plate has not been repainted and the numbers stamped in the plate appear to be the original factory numbers.
- Thieves may remove the VIN plate and replace it with one from a similar wrecked vehicle. If in doubt about plate authenticity, check with a new car dealer who handles the same model, or contact the Sheriff's Office.